

INCLUSION

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Planning is key to success in Howell Township

The enthusiasm Principal Joseph Polinski and Case Manager Peg Monahan have towards creating a successful inclusive environment at the Griebing School in Howell Township is clearly visible and they have now won two successive Exemplary Practices in Inclusion Awards, presented by the Developmental Disabilities Council. Howell Township is a K–8 school district with eight elementary schools and two middle schools serving approximately 7,500 students.

Students with disabilities have been included for several years at the Griebing School and the staff believe they have developed a comprehensive understanding of the many issues involved. Principal Joe Polinski commented that while inclusion was initially parent driven, it has evolved into a collaborative team approach, with all participants actively involved in the child's education. Initially, meetings were held monthly with staff and parents to be responsive to IEP issues and concerns; now they have become less frequent as the staff is more experienced and parents are more comfortable, having gained confidence in the school's abilities. As Mr. Polinski stated, "In the beginning we didn't even know what questions to ask, now we can anticipate issues down the road."

The district administrators, especially Dr. Enid Golden who at the time was Director of Pupil Services, have been extremely supportive in providing the

staff and resources needed. One example is the creation of an Inclusion Committee, funded by the district, which is co-chaired by Mr. Polinski and Ms. Monahan. The committee is composed of representatives from every school building and provides opportunities for dissemination of information and training purposes. They meet several times per year and following these meetings, Mr. Polinski meets with the Parent Advisory Council to give the parents general information and take their feedback to the Inclusion Committee, allowing a meaningful system for two-way communication.

One of the areas in which they have become proficient is the planning process, which is so crucial to the success of inclusive schools. Their process, entitled "Transition Planning for Successful Inclusion" was the basis for this year's

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See
pages
2 & 3 for
a list of
useful
inclusion
sites on the internet



Inclusion Internet Sites

Axis Disability Rights Website

Site of Norman Kunc and Emma Van der Klift, contains articles on disability issues.
<http://www.normemma.com/>

Big Pages of Special Education Links

Many resources listed on wide range of topics related to disabilities
<http://www.mts.net/~jgreenco/special.html>

Council for Exceptional Children

An international professional organization dedicated to improving educational outcomes for students with disabilities, and/or the gifted.
<http://www.cec.sped.org/>

IDEA practices

You can get IDEA law at this site
<http://www.ideapractices.org/>

IEP Team's Introduction To Functional Behavioral Assessment And Behavior Intervention Plans (2nd edition)

<http://www.air-dc.org/cecp/resources/problembehavior/main.htm>

Inclusion: The Book of Inclusive Education

Information for elementary and secondary education
<http://www.quasar.ualberta.ca/ddc/incl/intro.htm>

Inclusion: The MESH Manual for Inclusive Schools Making Effective Schools Happen For All Students

This manual provides guidelines for the development of inclusive schools
http://www.newhorizons.org/spneeds_meshman.html
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Exemplary Practices Award. This transition planning is carried out for all students included in general education settings, whether the move is from grade to grade or building to building.

“As you do this more, you start to realize you really have to plan ahead, if you don’t do that the program is just not going to work.”

Providing systematic transition planning has been an important element in including students with a variety of special needs, including Down Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy, Spina Bifida, and Dyslexia. As Joe Polinski stated, “As you do this more, you start to realize you really have to plan ahead, if you don’t do that the

program is just not going to work.” Several components have

been identified as critical in the planning process: staffing, training, scheduling, equipment/materials, accessibility, child involvement and parent

involvement. Each of these key areas has a formal plan developed with goals, person responsible, and suggested time frames identified (see example below).

Staffing is one of the first components to be addressed. Participants from the students’ present program and those who will be

Child Involvement

Goals	Person Responsible	Suggested Time Frame
Student to visit Receiving Program (Coordinate the activity, time period, parental permission, transportation, etc.)	Case Manager	April-June
Place support peers in same class	Principal	For September
Provide a list of student's interests, clubs, activities, accomplishments, etc. to the Receiving Staff, so the student can be fully included in all activities	Case Manager, Teacher, Child, Parent	June
Provide sensitivity training for classmates/student body	Guidance Counselor, Case Manager, Outside Agencies	June and/or September

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participating in the following year's program are brought together at appropriate times to address important issues, such as use of paraprofessionals, training, and augmentative communication systems. For example, there are two students transitioning from the elementary school to the middle school next year. Peg Monahan noted, "One of the best and most helpful elements in transitioning is having next year's teachers come in and spend time observing and communicating with the staff presently working with the student." The same is done in reverse, this year's staff will go to the middle school to look at the classrooms and meet with teachers and administrators.

Paraprofessionals, who are very familiar with the student's needs, play an essential role and are often the right hand person to the case manager. The school has recognized the importance of the paraprofessional and continuity in transition. As part of the job responsibility, the paraprofessional who is with the student in 5th grade is required to follow the same student to the middle school to complete the 6th grade. In one case, a student has a supine stander, which is quite large and needs to be stored when not in use. The paraprofessional noticed that there was no room in next year's classroom to store the stander and identified alternative storage places.



Training for personnel is another essential component. Ms. Monahan noted how support for inclusion has increased because, "Teachers and other staff know they will be receiving training, students are not dropped off at their door." The principal will assess the needs of the student and personnel and will schedule workshops accordingly. For example, if a particular student uses assistive technology, the teacher(s) and/or para will be sent to appropriate workshops. The staff will then return and share the information at an Inclusion Committee workshop for other staff personnel. Every September the related services personnel will train or retrain on skills needed for individual students, such as feeding, transferring and toileting.

Parents are regarded as equally important members of the team. As Mr. Polinski stated, "We involve the parent as much as possible because we see things a certain way as educators and parents are seeing things in a different way and it all has to come together."

Mr. Polinski and Ms. Monahan, along with the staff at the Griebing School have defined a process of planning which brings the knowledge and skills of many individuals together to ensure a successful inclusive program for their students. If you would like additional information, please contact Ms. Monahan at 732-462-1205.

Inclusion Internet Sites

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Inclusive Education Web Site by the Renaissance Group

This site answers some of the most frequently asked question on inclusion.
<http://www.uni.edu/coe/inclusion/>

New Jersey Department of Education/ Educators Site

<http://www.state.nj.us/njded/educators/toc.htm>

The National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY)

NICHCY is the national information and referral center that provides information on disabilities and disability-related issues for families, educators, and other professionals.
<http://www.nichcy.org/>

Special Education Resources on the Internet

A collection of Internet accessible information resources of interest to those involved in the fields related to special education.
<http://www.hood.edu/seri/serihome.htm>



Inclusion Insights

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Resources

Print Material:

- Downing, June E. Ph.D. (1996). *Including students with severe and multiple disabilities in typical classrooms: Practical strategies for teachers*. Brookes Publishing Co. Provides instructors the guidance needed to educate learners who have sensory, cognitive and/or physical disabilities, and emphasizes the compatibility of methods of teaching students with and without disabilities.
- Giangreco, Michael F. Ph.D., Cloninger, Chigee J., Ph.D., and Iverson, Virginia Salce, M.Ed. (1998). *COACH, 2nd Edition: Choosing Outcomes and Accommodations for Children: A guide to educational planning for students with disabilities*. Baltimore, MD: Brookes Publishing Co. Flexible planning tool is user-friendly, family oriented, and focused on life outcomes such as social relationships and participation in typical home, school, and community activities.
- Kochhar, Carol A., & West, Lynda, L. (1996). *Handbook for Successful Inclusion*. Gaithersburg, MD: Aspen Publishers. This book emphasizes inclusion practices that work, practical strategies at the classroom and school level and techniques for overcoming barriers to inclusion.
- Snell, Martha, Ph.D., & Janney, Rachel, Ph.D., with invited contributors. (1999). *Teachers' guides to inclusive practices*. Baltimore, MD: Brookes Publishing Co. A series of four issue-focused books which provides general and special educators, school principals, counselors, and related services staff with a bridge from research to practice. Titles include: Modifying Schoolwork, Social Relationships and Peer Support, Behavioral Support, and Collaborative Teaming.
- Rief, Sandra F. & Heimborge, Julie A. (1996). *How to reach and teach all students in the inclusive classroom: Ready-to-use strategies, lessons and activities for teaching students with diverse learning needs*. West Nyack, NY: The Center for Applied Research in Education.

Videos:

Inclusion Video Series by Wendy Dover, Peytral Publications

Tape 1 - "De-Mything" Inclusion, 42 minutes VHS \$129.95

Tape 2 - Taking The First Step: Strategies for Effectively Communicating About Special Students, 31 minutes VHS \$129.95

Tape 3 - Strategies for Making Curriculum Modifications, 53 minutes VHS \$129.95

Tape 4 - Strategies For Co-Planning and Co-Teaching, 34 minutes VHS \$129.95. You can save when you order all four video tapes in the Inclusion Video Series, \$498.00. Available at: <http://www.peytral.com>.



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SPAN

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